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Housekeepers' Chat

Thursday, March 7, 1929 ★

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Subject: "Green Vegetables as Spring Tonic Substitutes."

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Ho, hum! I told you so. I knew it was coming. Last week three young men sent me verses, of their own making. One verse is written on fragile lavender stationery, another on delicate green, and the third on the back of a pink envelope.

"I just dashed it off," reads the note beneath the verse. "Something seemed to come over me, all of a sudden, and this original verse about spring is the result. I shall be glad for any suggestions from you, Aunt Sammy."

Well, this is a hard problem. I hardly know what to do about it. Perhaps if the young man would eat more vegetables -- that's the solution, I'm sure -- more green leafy vegetables. Three vegetables a day, one of them a green, would probably ward off most of the spring fever attacks.

Seriously speaking -- of course I'm serious all of the time, but now I'm very serious -- green leafy vegetables are an essential in the diet, because of their valuable minerals and vitamins. If we'd all eat lots of vegetables, there would be little need for spring tonics.

Among the leafy vegetables high in minerals and vitamins are lettuce, cabbage, spinach, kale, endive, broccoli, dandelion greens, and beet tops. Fresh vegetables are pretty expensive at this time of the year in some places, but we can alternate between canned, cooked, and raw vegetables.

Uncooked vegetables retain all of their food value, whereas cooked vegetables may lose some of their valuable food elements. The amount of minerals contained in cooked vegetables, for example, is largely determined by the method of cooking. Greens cooked in a large amount of water do not contain as much iron as greens cooked in a small amount of water. Some of the vitamins, too, may be lost by prolonged heating. Vegetables are more palatable, when not over cooked. The liquid left after cooking vegetables should be saved, and used in soups or sauces.

Shall we fix up a menu, while we're on the subject of vegetables? Let's look through the cookbook, and see what's good in meats. Pot roast, steak, croquettes, hash -- no, we don't want any of those today. How's this -- Fresh Beef Tongue, on page 29. That's an appetizing spring time dish.

With the beef tongue we can serve spinach, turnip greens, kale, or any other spring green. Fried parsnips would go well with the tongue. There's a recipe for Fried Parsnips in the cookbook, too. That's everything but the dessert. I have here a new recipe for Pecan Waffles; it seems to me they'd be delicious, with maple sirup, as our dessert. I know waffles are supposed to be a breakfast food, but there's no law forbidding them at dinner time.

Let's check the menu again, and then I'll tell you about the Pecan Waffles. This is the menu: Fresh Tongue, boiled; Spinach, Turnip Greens, Kale, or any other spring green; Fried Parsnips; Pecan Waffles, and Maple Sirup.

Eight ingredients, you'll need for the Pecan Waffles:

1-1/3 cups sifted flour	1 cup milk
2 teaspoons baking powder	2 eggs
3/4 teaspoon salt	1 or 2 tablespoons melted butter,
1 tablespoon sugar	and 1 cup chopped pecan meats

Eight ingredients, for Pecan Waffles: (Repeat)

Sift the dry ingredients together, add the milk and the beaten egg yolks, then the melted butter. Stir in the nuts, and then fold in the well-beaten egg whites. Have the waffle iron hot enough to brown the waffle quickly. If an electric waffle iron is used, it does not require greasing, and 2 tablespoons of melted butter should be used in the batter.

We'll devote the rest of our time to questions and answers.

First question: "Please tell me a good method of making fine bread crumbs."

In the first place, the bread must be very dry. It is a good plan to keep scraps of bread for making into crumbs in a paper bag until they become very hard. Then the bread can be grated, ground in a food chopper, or crushed with a rolling pin on a board. After this, the crumbs should be sifted so that they are not only very fine, but very even. Crumbs of this kind are needed for rolling croquettes, and other kinds of food to be fried in deep fat. For use on top of scalloped dishes or in various mixtures, bread crumbs do not of course need to be prepared so carefully.

Second question: "Can you tell me how to keep brown sugar from forming hard lumps?"

The Recipe Lady says that she has had the same trouble that you describe with keeping brown sugar from forming hard lumps. The best method of preventing this that she has found is to store the sugar in airtight glass jars or tin cans and keep a piece of fresh bread in with the sugar. Just enough moisture passes from the bread to the sugar to keep it soft. In the summer of course you would have to look at the bread every few days to be sure that it was not getting moldy. As the bread dries out it should be replaced with a fresh piece.

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Third question: "What is okra?"

Okra, or gumbo, as many people call it, is a vegetable used a great deal in the south. It is becoming popular in the north, too, and many people are adding it to their vegetable gardens. Okra is used mainly in soups, but it may also be served as a green vegetable. It is especially good panned.

Fourth question: "Please tell me how to remove lime from a tea kettle."

If the deposit of lime is not too heavy, it can be removed with a hot solution of vinegar or of commercial muriatic acid, using one part muriatic acid to five parts of water. Muriatic acid can be bought in a drug store. It must be handled with great care, however, because it is very corrosive and poisonous. After the lime has been soaked off with the acid solution, the tea kettle should be rinsed several times and thoroughly washed. If the lime deposit has become very thick and hard, there is no practical way of removing it.

The next question is from a listener who asks whether the samples of material she sent me is osnaburg, the fabric used for couch covers, draperies, and so forth. The sample of material which she sent is organdie. Osnaburg is an entirely different fabric. It is a heavier fabric, which looks somewhat like unbleached linen crash, but is made entirely of cotton. It is sold by one of the big mail order houses, and by one of the national chain stores. If you have trouble in obtaining it, I suggest that you write to the Cotton-Textile Institute, 320 Broadway, New York City. Osnaburg is also sold as almanac cloth, or Greenville cloth.

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Tomorrow: "Know your Insecticides." More information about labels, from the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration, U. S. D. A.

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